USE ERGONOMICS TO REDUCE INJURIES

Employers can improve employee comfort and reduce injuries by applying ergonomic principles in their workplace. Ergonomics is the science of arranging and adjusting the work environment to fit the worker.

For employees who type a great deal or spend a large portion of their day on computer-related tasks, here are some items to check:

- Monitor: the top should be at or below eye level, slightly lower for those wearing bifocals. The screen should be 18 to 24 inches from the eyes.
- Document holder: place at the same height and distance as the monitor to reduce head movement and eyestrain.
- Chair height and back: adjust so that feet are flat on the floor.
- Keyboard: place directly in front of the monitor at the proper height to keep wrists straight and relaxed on a padded wrist rest. Forearms should be parallel to the floor.
- Lighting: use indirect lighting to avoid screen glare and use a glare shield if necessary. Place monitor at a right angle to the window and use shades to block sunlight.
- Other equipment: place phone, notepad and mouse in easy reach.
- Under desk: provide enough room to stretch or change leg positions.

Most of the recommended changes require simple adjustments to existing equipment and work areas. A new or different chair may be required but the expense will be worthwhile if you can avoid injuries and improve productivity.

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